

STAFF USE ONLY – OR AIR QUALITY ISSUES

Updated 11/20/19

Escalation paths:

- Questions from members of the press or media: refer them to press@seattlechildrens.org
- Individuals who want to file a complaint: refer them to family.feedback@seattlechildrens.org
- Questions about specific ORs (like: “In what room was my child’s surgery done/what rooms tested positive for aspergillus/can you reschedule me in a room that did not test for aspergillus”): forward to Ruth McDonald or her designee.
 - a. Script:
 - i. I do not have that information.
 - ii. I will forward your request to someone and they will get back to you.

Scheduling related questions

- Will my child’s surgery get cancelled?
 - This will depend on the type of surgery or procedure. Coordinators from the Surgery Center will call patients and families to give updates about rescheduled or postponed surgeries.
- If my child’s surgery was cancelled or postponed, will I need to get a new referral to reschedule?
 - This will depend on your clinic and/or surgery. If your clinic has requested a new referral for rescheduling your surgery, please follow-up with your PCP. They will help you get a new referral.
- My child’s surgery has been postponed for a long time. How soon can we reschedule?
 - I am sorry about this continued delay.
 - The timing of rescheduling procedures is determined by several factors, including how soon the surgery needs to be done (based on discussions with your attending provider).
 - Over the coming days and weeks, your clinic will contact you to give you an update.

General FAQs

- What happened?
 - On November 10, routine air tests detected Aspergillus in three operating rooms and two procedural areas.
- What are you doing in response?
 - On Wednesday, Nov. 13, we closed our main operating rooms (ORs) at the hospital to inspect our air handling system and determine the appropriate corrective actions.
 - After careful consideration and consultation with outside experts, we have decided to proceed with the immediate installation of custom in-room HEPA filtration in 10 ORs and two equipment storage rooms, and to continue with the planned installation of the new air handling system.

- Are you closing ORs?
 - Yes. To allow for the installation of the new filtration systems, 10 ORs will remain closed until the end of January.
 - We will continue to perform surgeries in the four remaining ORs, three of which already have HEPA filtration.
 - Cases that must be done at Seattle Children's will be performed in the ORs with HEPA filtration.
 - Only those surgeries that pose little or no risk of infection will be performed in the OR that does not yet have HEPA filtration.
 - After February, the one remaining OR will receive its in-room HEPA filtration system.
- What kind of procedures are being done in the ORs that don't have HEPA?
 - The procedures that will be done in these spaces will be minimally or non-invasive and so pose little or no risk of aspergillus infection.
- What is HEPA?
 - HEPA is an extremely effective filtration system that removes more than 99% of particles from the air passing through the filter.
- Why didn't you already have it in the ORs?
 - Installing in-room HEPA filtration requires custom-building a system for each OR.
 - We had previously planned to build in-room filtration systems room-by-room in order to minimize disruption to our patients and have already completed this work in three rooms.
 - The room-by-room installation was previously scheduled to be completed by July 2020.
- Why can't you make these changes faster?
 - It takes several months to design and fabricate these units.
 - Then they have to be custom-fitted into our operating rooms.
- Is Seattle Children's hiding information or lying to the press?
 - We took appropriate legal steps to protect the identity of our patients and the confidentiality of our quality improvement information.
 - Protecting the privacy of our patients is not only the right thing to do, it's the law. We continually strive to be transparent and accountable while also honoring the privacy of our patients and families.
- What is causing Aspergillus to be present in the operating rooms?
 - At this time, we are unsure of the source of Aspergillus in the operating rooms and are actively investigating.
- Can you assure me that my child will not be exposed to aspergillus in the future?
 - We are in the process of replacing our air handling unit and installing custom in-room HEPA in every OR.
 - HEPA is an extremely effective filtration system that removes 99.97 percent of particles from the air that passes through the filter. This is the highest level of filtration found in operating rooms today.
 - We will not reopen our OR until these enhancements are complete.
- My child had surgery there previously. Was my child exposed to aspergillus?
 - Since re-opening our ORs in July, we have been actively monitoring those patients we believe to be at a higher risk of infection based on the type of surgery they had.

- I am concerned that my child may have been exposed to aspergillus in the past. What should I do?
 - Since re-opening our ORs in July, we have been actively monitoring those patients we believe to be at a higher risk of infection based on the type of surgery they had.
 - Most Aspergillus surgical site infections develop within four months of surgery. If you are concerned about changes in your child's health, please contact your clinic directly and speak with your child's provider.
- Is this air quality issue related to construction?
 - Aspergillus is only found in the top 6 inches of soil; the construction adjacent to our hospital buildings is many feet deep.
 - We have been routinely testing the air in hospital areas nearest the construction site and have not found any aspergillus spores.
 - Also, to be extra safe during construction, we:
 - Sealed all doors and windows near the construction site.
 - Installed fans that blow dust away from the hospital.
 - Routinely test the air.
- If family is upset or wants to file a complaint:
 - I am sorry that this happened.
 - You may contact our Patient and Family Relations department by calling 206-987-2550. If you need an interpreter, call 866-583-1527 and ask to be connected to 7-2550.